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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1594

RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VALLETTA 000228

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [EAID](#) [ECIN](#) [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [EWWT](#) [MARR](#) [MAS](#) [MCAP](#)

MOPS, PNSA, PINS, PREL, SENV, SMIG, SNAR, MT

SUBJECT: MALTA'S REACTION TO GLOBAL MARITIME PARTNERSHIP
(GMP) INITIATIVE

REF: A. STATE 050488

[B. VALLETTA 00134](#)

Classified By: PolOff McCummings for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Ambassador briefed key Maltese military and civilian officials about GMP. The Maltese expressed enthusiasm about the concept. Several GMP-related areas of cooperation already exist, and the Maltese were eager to explore further areas. Malta's Foreign Minister said that at an upcoming EU Ministerial in Brent, France dedicated to maritime issues, Malta would push for regulation of shipping routes in the Mediterranean. End Summary

Meetings at Armed Forces of Malta

¶2. On May 22 Ambassador met key officials at the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) Headquarters to explain the Global Maritime Partnership (GMP) initiative. The Ambassador met with the AFM Commander (CHOD) Brigadier General Carmel Vassallo, AFM Deputy Commander Colonel Martin Xuereb, and Director of Defense Matters in the Office of the Prime Minister Vanessa Frazier (Comment-- Frazier has an American husband and daughter, and is known to be very pro-US. She is the sole GoM official, apart from the Prime Minister himself, who oversees defense issues. Although the CHOD hails from the left-of-center opposition Malta Labor Party (MLP), he is exceptionally pro-US as well, and attended the Chief of Naval Operations' presentation of the new Maritime Strategy "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower" on October 17, 2007, at the Naval War College during the International Seapower Symposium. Col. Xuereb maintains strong support from the ruling Malta Nationalist Party and is likely to succeed Brigadier General Vassallo as CHOD at some point.)

¶3. (C) The Ambassador provided her interlocutors with an overview of GMP, and encouraged the GoM to embrace the GMP principles. Frazier and the CHOD responded enthusiastically to the vision and principles of the GMP, particularly with respect to ongoing activities such as Malta's recent entry into the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and Malta's building niche reputation as a regional Search and Rescue (SAR) training expert through the U.S. European Command-funded SAR Training Center run by the AFM. Frazier specifically stated that Malta was always looking for ways to partner with the United States on maritime security issues and initiatives. The CHOD stated that regarding security, even small countries can bring something to the table. He was enthusiastic about Malta's participation in current U.S. Naval engagement initiatives such as the Maritime Safety and Security Information System (MSSIS), and SIXTH Fleet's recent OPERATION PHOENIX EXPRESS. The Ambassador agreed that the SAR Training Center was an excellent example of the kind of multilateral cooperation envisioned by GMP, with personnel from more than a dozen regional countries studying latest SAR techniques in Malta, many of them with USG financial support.

Meeting with Foreign Minister

¶4. (C) On May 30 Ambassador and DCM met Maltese Foreign Minister Tonio Borg to brief him on GMP. Borg was likewise enthusiastic about the opportunity for expanded cooperation. In addition to the SARTC mentioned above, he told the Ambassador that he had another idea that might fall under the rubric of GMP. Malta was concerned about the possibility of an oil spill ruining Malta's coastline and tourism-based economy. The fact that most oil tankers transiting the Mediterranean passed through the narrower channel north of Malta (between Malta and Sicily) rather than the wider channel south of Malta (between Malta and Libya/Tunisia) exacerbated the problem. At an EU Ministerial in Brest, France July 12-13 at which a "Common EU Maritime Policy" would be discussed, Malta intended to push for EU regulation of Mediterranean shipping routes, with perhaps up to half of shipping being directed to the south of Malta.

¶5. (C) For background, see the following USDAO Valletta IIR's--

IIR 6 917 0096 08 121324Z May 08 (U) MULTINATIONAL IMPRESSIONS OF NAVAL FORCES EUROPE'S OPERATION PHOENIX EXPRESS 2008

IIR 6 917 0026 08 221404Z Apr 08 (U) THE EVOLVING REGIONAL SECURITY POSTURE OF MALTA

IIR 6 917 0076 08 201412Z Mar 08 (U) MALTA APPLIES TO REJOIN VALLETTA 00000228 002 OF 002

NATO'S PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

IIR 6 917 0016 05 (U) BIOGRAPHIC REPORT-MALTA, CARMEL ((VASSALLO)), BRIGADIER GENERAL, COMMANDER, ARMED FORCES OF MALTA

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